

have been doing. They have been working on groundwater management education. They have been working in the areas of irrigation scheduling. They have been working in the area of irrigation run-off control. They have been measuring static water levels for the purpose of providing some consistency there to find out whether or not the water levels in the Upper Big Blue area are going up or down. And, more importantly and an issue that I think is very important, especially to Senator Beutler because I know he has an interest in the nitrate, nitrogen issue, contaminating our groundwater, the Conservation District in this particular area of the state has been doing a lot of work in the areas of nitrate testing and do have a program set up along those lines and last year they tested 265 domestic wells twice a year. They also have what I think is something very important, lab facilities for testing and last year they sampled nearly 3100 samples to provide I think some measure of whether there is nitrate contamination in that area. All of these programs taken in conjunction with each other, I think, prove that at least the Blue River Conservation District has been doing a very fine job and I think the work that they have been doing has been beneficial to the public, but more importantly to the farmers in the State of Nebraska and I think that is what is important. If we are concerned about water quality, which I am assuming this body has shown by the adoption of LB 284 and I think some other water quality bills that will come through this body this year or in the coming years, I think this association should be allowed to continue and thrive and continue the work that they have been providing the State of Nebraska. I am hoping that we will provide for what this bill calls for which is a simple extension of five more years of life to the natural...or the Groundwater Conservation Districts. As I said, I don't know but I would have to say to you, in all honesty, that the work that they have been doing has been beneficial to the State of Nebraska. Now, if you have a philosophical concern over whether this work should be done...being done by the NRDs today, that is another matter. But I think we have to look at the facts. We have to look at what they are doing and I think they have been doing a fine job in this particular area of the state and work very well with the NRD in that particular area of the state. I am hoping that we can extend that work because I think the work they have been providing to us has been very important and will continue to be important as environment issues begin to dominate this